1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

292 This dress was in regular use in every village in Metabhum until a year or two ago. At my last visit in March 1934, I was 535 amazed to find that, almost as in obedience to some decree that had gone forth, the youth of the hills had abandoned the rib-dress, the 178 shield and the gaily-coloured head-dress and skirt, sometimes wearing in lieu cheap bazaar singlets and a *dhoti*, retaining, however, the buttock-bells, the songs and the dance-steps. The older men all said that it was a spontaneous decision of the younger generation, decided upon because of the cost of buying the expensive yards of cloth needed for the dress; but this would not account for the abandonment of the shield, which they make themselves, and for which peacock tails are better than cloth streamers. Many have actually thrown away their cloth and shields. But some still think it necessary to hang them up round fresh graves, and I found that all the youths still know how to make them, and were willing to make them in camp. In 1932 a rumour went through all the tribes 203 of Jeypore and spread thence into Bastar that a god had descended 784 on one of the mountains of the Eastern Ghats and commanded all 178 men to give up keeping black poultry and goats, wearing clothes or using umbrellas or blankets with any black in them, and using beads or articles made of aluminium alloy. The message was rapidly bruited abroad, and everywhere villages had '*bohorani*' ceremonies for purifying themselves from disease, and cast out black goats, cocks, hens, umbrellas, blankets, 'waskats', beads, aluminium ornaments and domestic utensils on the village boundary. Mohammedans began to make a good thing out of slaughtering the goats or exporting them. Strenuous propaganda by the State soon stopped this impoverishing rumour, and some of the villagers in the end recovered much of their property from the police, who had been ordered to take charge of it. At the time, the Bison-horn Marias seemed to have been only a little affected and the Hill Marias not at all; possibly this sudden abandonment of the most picturesque features of their dancing costume may be a late repercussion. Such sudden moves amongst Indian primitive tribes are not uncommon; the Gonds of Nagpur and adjacent districts a few years ago suddenly decided to give up keeping poultry and pigs as a measure of social uplift.

292 The *taghali* or bark cloak used by the Hill Maria for warmth or, primarily, protection against heavy dew and rain, has already been mentioned as deputizing occasionally for the sleeping-mat. Hutton speaks of the Angami Nagas making 'a large hat of leaves and basket work . . . as well as a rain-coat of plaited grass, the ends of which hang out loose, to

Rain-clothes